

Sex and Intellectual Freedom

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Intellectual freedom is an abstract concept. As applied to libraries, it is a much broader principle than judging whether a book about male penguins raising a chick is suitable for a school library collection. The American Library Association gives the following definition of intellectual freedom: “Intellectual freedom is the right of every individual to both seek and receive information from all points of view without restriction. It provides for free access to all expressions of ideas through which any and all sides of a question, cause or movement may be explored.” (American Library Association) Within a literal reading of this definition, intellectual freedom on sexual topics is sorely lacking in American culture and its libraries.

This entry will focus on the United States since a cross cultural understanding of intellectual freedom is a topic too large to deal with in any detail. Intellectual freedom in public and school libraries is emphasized with broader cultural trends added as needed. The American ideal of intellectual freedom developed within the context of First Amendment rights. “Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances” (Bill of Rights 1789). The corollary of freedom of speech is the freedom to access what others have said. Legislation and court decisions have established certain exceptions to freedom of speech such as libel, child pornography, and obscenity; but the United States is more liberal, at least legally, in regard to political speech than many Western democracies. (Cohen Henry 2003) Canada, France, and Austria, among others, prohibit, for example, hate speech or advocating Nazi doctrines.

(Rosenberg 2000) On the other hand, many Western democracies are much more liberal, at least in practice, about matters of sexual expression. (Herzog 2011)

Legalities are much less important in the area of sex and intellectual freedom than are cultural values. Viewing adult pornography on the Internet is legal. Estimates vary on the number of adults who visit porn sites but are in the range of 25-34 million weekly. (Covenant Eyes) The number of users who would admit doing so is decidedly less. In many parts of the United States, working in the sex industry may offer the best economic prospects for both women and men. “Sex workers receive \$25-30 per hour, roughly four times what they could expect outside prostitution.” (“Finance And Economics: Selling sex; Economics focus” 2008) In addition, more women entered the sex industry during the economic downturn because traditional jobs were less available or paid too little. (Sotelo 23) Providing career counseling for these jobs could be viewed as a useful and legitimate public library function and meet a legitimate information need. One book on this topic, *Turning Pro* by Magdalene Meretrix, includes such practical topics as “Continuing Education Within the Field” and “Planning for the Future” but, according to WorldCat, only one public library holds this item. (“Full text of “Loompanics 2003 Catalog”) American public libraries generally do not provide materials on alternate heterosexual lifestyles such as cross dressing, swinging with multiple partners on a permanent or temporary basis, and “deviant” behaviors such as sadomasochism though these activities are legal in most jurisdictions. Lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) individuals may receive even less support for and representation of their lifestyle.

Many jurisdictions use various strategies to regulate the sex industry rather than directly prosecuting the sexual activities that might well be found to be legal. There are “four main tools available to regulate adult businesses: obscenity, zoning, licensing, and nuisance control. It is not

surprising to learn that it's easier to regulate activities with no speech content than it is to regulate adult bookstores or movie houses” (Henderson 2004) Another effective tactic is to focus on concerns about children up to the age of eighteen because they have fewer legal rights than adults. Fortunately for intellectual freedom in the United States, the Supreme Court most often decides that legislation cannot be written in a way that reduces adult access to materials to the level that would be suitable for children. In the filtering cases like CIPA, “the Supreme Court ruled emphatically that any such restriction of adult access must be removed at the request of an adult. The filter must be disabled immediately in order to ensure that the rights of adult patrons are not being trampled.” (Mauger 2012) Finally, libraries, especially public libraries, most often follow community cultural standards and are more subject to pressure from individuals and organized groups because public libraries depend upon the community for their funding. In the same way, school libraries find it hard to argue against concerned parents who ask why their innocent children should be exposed to “smut.”

Difficulties in Assessing Intellectual Freedom

Assessing the state of intellectual freedom in American society at large and in public libraries is a formidable task for many reasons.

The Diversity of American Culture.

The diversity of American culture complicates any generalization about sex and intellectual freedom in libraries. Different areas and cultures in America are more conservative or liberal in sexual matters overall; but the public library, at least in principle, is supposed to meet the needs of all its users and represent multiple viewpoints. Some communities may not

have a clear majority for any viewpoint. These viewpoints may even differ from one library branch to another within a large public library system.

Differences in the Attitudes of Librarians toward Intellectual Freedom

Intellectual freedom is given as a core value of librarianship and accepted as such by most librarians, at least in theory. It is doubtful, however, that many librarians follow a hard line in support of intellectual freedom especially in the hot button area of sex. In addition, librarians possess varying degrees of courage in their willingness to take on conflicts arising from defending intellectual freedom. These librarians may also make different judgments on the possibilities of intellectual freedom conflicts arising in their communities. The simplest path to avoid purchasing some sexual materials is to discover some superficially valid reason for not adding them to the library's collection. One such case is Madonna's *Sex*, a *New York Times* best seller. "An often-stated reason for not buying *Sex* was the likelihood of its being stolen. Other reasons were the probability of its falling apart (though DeCandido indicated it can be rebound), the multimedia design, and the high cost (\$49.95 retail) even after a library distributor's discount." (Fialkoff 1992) Another example is the 2013 bestseller *50 Shades of Grey* where some librarians avoided purchasing this tremendously popular novel because "the reviews weren't good. They said the book was very poorly written..." (ALA Intellectual Freedom Committee 2012, 147). In both cases, for such high demand items, the libraries most likely would have purchased similar non-controversial books with the same "flaws."

Publication Availability

Librarians cannot buy sexual materials if they are not available. Most public libraries, especially smaller ones, depend upon traditional library vendors who stock most of their wares from traditional trade publishers. Traditional publishers are not adverse to publishing edgy

works, mostly fiction, if the sales potential is high. For example, they publish urban fiction with its profanity, sex, and violence since it sells well within the African-American community and is most often bought by urban public libraries with few attempts at censorship. Trade publishers have become, however, risk adverse on more controversial sexual topics.

Traditional publishers, however, are not the only source for publications on sexual topics. The Internet has opened up publishing sexual materials by non-traditional sources. Smaller “niche” publishers compete successfully with the traditional publishers by understanding their narrower markets and the authors who write for them. According to blogger Scarlett Stevens, examples of specialized publishers of erotica include Elora’s Cave, Carnal Desires Publishing, Phaze Books, Liquid Silver Books and Excessiva.(Stevens) In addition, digital publishing and print-on-demand has reduced the need for large print runs and reduced overhead costs.

The two factors above have led to another important development for the availability of erotica to libraries—the growth of self-publishing. Authors can make their books available at a relatively small cost and market them online. Amazon aggressively courts authors and provides support for self-publishing with its service CreateSpace. (CreateSpace) Amazon, in fact, has a relatively good record for avoiding censorship as can be seen by its initial defense of publishing *The Pedophile’s Guide to Love and Pleasure* though the company later caved to public pressure. (Shepherd) Statistically, the growth in self-publishing has been enormous. “A staggering 764,448 titles were produced in 2009 by self-publishers and micro-niche publishers, according to statistics released this morning by R.R. Bowker. The number of “nontraditional” titles dwarfed that of traditional books whose output slipped to 288,355 last year from 289,729 in 2008.” (Milliot 2010) Libraries, however, are less likely to purchase materials from smaller presses and self-published materials because these items seldom are reviewed except in specialized sources,

are often difficult to identify, and may require inefficient separate purchases from the publisher or author. (Grobelyny 2013) Some libraries even have difficulty in getting authorization to purchase from Amazon even though Amazon has “launched a new Corporate Accounts program (www.amazon.com/corporate), accepting online purchase orders from qualified businesses, libraries, schools, government institutions and other organizations that want to purchase items from across the Amazon.com Web site without using a credit card.” (Amazon.com)

Focus on Challenges

Much of the current publicity for intellectual freedom focuses on challenges in public and school libraries. The American Library Association (ALA) Office of Intellectual Freedom (OIF) sponsors a highly effective Banned Books Week each year. This emphasis on challenges inhibits a more serious discussion of intellectual freedom for several reasons. To be challenged, the book must have been purchased for the library. Furthermore, the list of most challenged books most often includes a high percentage of children’s materials or adult books assigned to be read by teenagers. Thus, it can be argued that this emphasis upon challenges may trivialize the concept of intellectual freedom. By focusing on objections that are often ludicrous, librarians can easily say that they have no problems with these materials while overlooking the seriousness of providing information on controversial but important sexual matters. (Holley 2012)

Children and Young Adults

Court decisions have affirmed that children and young adults have intellectual freedom rights though to a more limited extent than adults. They also have more rights as they get older until the day they have full adult rights at the age of eighteen. (Kelsey, 2007) (Chmara & Mach, 2004) A complicating issue is that parents have some but not total control over their children’s access to information. While many parents give their children relatively broad freedom in their

reading and viewing, some wish to restrict access to only materials of which they approve.

Public libraries have taken the stance that parents should accompany their children to the library if they wish strictly to restrict their access. Some libraries do, however, have policies in place partially to block access. Some examples include requiring parents to approve checking out certain types of materials such as videos, restricting access to the adult collection, and the legal requirement as stated above to filter Internet access to be eligible for E-rate discounts. Many consider that exceptions exist to the rights of parents to control access to information where children or, more frequently, young adults need parentally prohibited information to deal with urgent information needs such as sexual orientation or sexual abuse. (Kniffel 1999)

School media centers have a more difficult task in defending their libraries from intellectual freedom challenges because school librarians do not have the public library defense that parents have the duty to supervise their children's library use by coming with them to the library (Aftab, Herb and Klipsch 2000). The school acts *in loco parentis* and thus shoulders a greater responsibility. The problem of age appropriate materials becomes more pronounced when the same media center serves a broad age range such as early middle school through advanced placement high school seniors. (Chelton 2011) No simple solutions exist for the media center though some have collections restricted to advanced classes or requiring parental approval. Some strategies to minimize the possible confrontation with parents include not book talking or displaying potentially objectionable materials and avoiding making controversial reading recommendations unless the media specialist knows the student well. Some media specialists sacrifice intellectual freedom by not purchasing items with the slightest hint controversy including a broad range of sexual materials. As for Internet filtering, many school librarians have

no choice but to accept filtering since the E-rate discount applies to the entire school district; and school administrators impose filtering to gain the cost savings.

Print Materials

Sex instruction should be considered a health or human development issue that would not engender much controversy, but this is seldom the case within schools. The initial question is the age at which to start “sex ed.” While the experts recommend starting early, some parents believe that they should be able to preserve the “innocence” of their children as long as possible, perhaps in extreme cases for women until they get married as was the case in prior generations. In 1999, Landry, Singh, and Darroch investigated sexuality education including the attitudes of teachers and parents as well as the importance of abstinence only education (Landry, Singh and Darroch 2000). They concluded that “a large proportion of schools are doing little to prepare students in grades five and six for puberty, much less for dealing with pressures and decisions regarding sexual activity.” State laws present another complicating factor. Teachers may be forbidden from discussing anything but traditional morality and gender orientation. Any discussion of birth control, masturbation, LGBT issues, and any option except abstinence and heterosexual sex within marriage can be illegal. In Michigan, for example, one of the summary headings states the following: “Required Content Including Emphasis on Abstinence” The section goes on to require teaching the benefits of abstaining from sex until marriage and the negative consequences of having sex before then. The possibility of gay or lesbian sex is not mentioned in this summary document that also omits, of course, any mention of the human value of sexual pleasure.

(Michigan Department of Education 2007)

For librarians, an essential book that crosses the boundaries by age and type of library is *For SEX EDUCATION, See Librarian: A Guide to Issues and Resources* by Cornog and Perper.

The authors have written a comprehensive resource on sexual matters. (Perper and Cornog 1996)

To quote the description on Amazon.com:

At long last, here is the definitive practical guide to sexuality materials in libraries and an annotated bibliography of nearly 600 recommended books for school and public libraries. Cornog and Perper, the preeminent experts on sexuality materials for libraries, provide guidelines for materials selection, reference, processing, access, programming, and dealing with problems of vandalism and censorship. The bibliography, organized into 5 topics and 48 subtopics, annotates a collection of recommended books and nonprint materials on sexuality information for children and adults, most published since 1985. Recommended works represent a wide variety of views, including Christian and conservative. (Amazon.com)

This book is the best place to start for a general overview of this topic for public and school libraries.

These strictures may extend to the school media center. These laws contradict in some sense parental control because some parents hold values that go against these limited choices in sexual education. While strict neutrality in these areas is impossible because accepting multiple viewpoints is in itself a value, accepting multiple values in this area would appear to be a logical extension of the multiplicity and non-exclusivity of viewpoints extended to differing religious and moral viewpoints by the first amendment. Surprisingly, beyond the discussion of individual titles, no general research article on this topic appears to exist.

The public library has much greater flexibility in matters of sexual education and other sexual topics. Since the public library is not subject to the same legal standards as public schools, any constraints will be self-imposed. Cohen concluded, however, in her research study that “it is clear that many librarians view the role of the public library as a peripheral source for sexual-health information for young adults. They do not believe that it is within the purview of the public library to advocate sexual-health education, develop or promote programs, or highlight relevant sections within their collections.” (Cohen, R. 2008)

Adults also need factual information about sex and sexual health. Sexual health is less controversial for adults because our society assumes that adults are sexually active and accepts the reality, if not the philosophy, of sexual activity outside of marriage. Society has an interest in preventing the spread of sexually transmitted diseases so that public libraries encounter less opposition to providing this type of information. AIDS prevention has been a particularly strong collection area though other diseases such as syphilis, herpes, gonorrhea, etc. also receive attention. While somewhat overlapping the issue of sexual technique, adults of both sexes seek out information on erectile dysfunction, how to achieve orgasm, and the effects of aging upon sexual activity and performance. Adults may also seek out materials on the norms of sex within American culture to learn where they fit in. *The Joy of Sex* by Alex Comfort remains one of the most recognizable titles (Comfort 2009) along with *The Joy of Gay Sex* by Silverstein and Picano (Silverstein and Felice 2004).

Lifestyle choices and other sexual information make up a second category with high sexual content. This category includes both fiction and non-fiction, but this article will stress non-fiction except for younger children. For them, the main reasons for challenges are sex, violence, and homosexuality. One common theme found objectionable is having the child live in a non-traditional family that does not include a man and a woman who are married to each other. Examples include *Heather Has Two Mommies* by Leslea Newman and *Daddy's Roommate* by Michael Willhoite. This category is related more to the sexual activity of the parents than that of the child. Other common themes that lead to banning include sexual content in general, violence, disrespect, and just plain scariness. (University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign Social Sciences 2013)

Post-puberty children in middle or high school usually have great interest in learning about courtship and mating rituals. Most non-fiction materials focus on heterosexual relations with broad discussion of the role of dating in teenage life. Many of these materials could be seen as etiquette with a sexual component. Topics can include how to attract the opposite sex, rules for dating, and sometimes discussions of sexual options. Such materials also exist for LGBT students but are less common and less likely to be purchased by public libraries and school library media centers. One example is *Friendship, dating, and relationships* by Simone Payment, which is held by 159 libraries in WorldCat. (Payment 2010) One interesting area for graduating high school students is career guidance for working in the legal sex industry, where resources are almost totally lacking. Working in the legal sex industry can be one of the more lucrative career choices for both men and women and has the same legal status as working in a minister's office. Cultural prohibitions exist, however, about talking about such options. Providing some sort of career guidance would help reduce the potential risks of such careers. The same comments would apply for adults. Beyond the example already mentioned above, one such book is *I, 2, 3, be a porn star: a step-by-step guide to the adult sex industry for men and women* by Ana Loria. (Loria 2000) While working as a porn star is legal, only five libraries in WorldCat hold this title of which only one is a public library. On Amazon.com, the book is, however, surprisingly popular with 35 customer reviews and a respectable sales rank of #3,248,734. (Amazon.com)

The range of materials for adults is theoretically much larger because adults have much more freedom in sexual matters. The public library can provide access to much non-controversial materials on heterosexual lifestyles including dating, courtship, marriage, and sexual issues within the traditional married couple. This literature can be on the advice columnist level or include serious research studies. This advice often is in keeping with cultural norms so that

literature on how to snag a husband is acceptable, while a text on how to seduce a woman is not as can be seen by the multiple titles from mainstream publishers with significant library holdings on the first topic compared with mostly self-published titles without library holdings on the second. Some topics may deal with controversial topics such as affairs and visits to prostitutes but within the context of an exclusive heterosexual relationship as the desired norm with advice on how to “correct” the problem. The sexual literature may even include religious perspectives on maintaining a “moral” and “traditional” lifestyle.

The public library is less likely to collect materials on non-traditional heterosexual and gay/lesbian lifestyles. The research that follows identifies practical non-scholarly materials in Amazon.com and then checks their availability in libraries by checking WorldCat holdings. An exception is cohabitation, which is well represented in public library collections. The results are as follows: *Shacking Up: The Smart Girl's Guide to Living in Sin without Getting Burned* by Stacy Whitman, 373 holding libraries; *Unmarried to Each Other: The Essential Guide to Living Together as an Unmarried Couple* by Dorian Solot and Marshall Miller, 613 holding libraries; and *How to Move in with Your Boyfriend (and Not Break up with Him)* by Tiffany Curent, 215 holding libraries. Bondage is another subject with some holdings in public libraries. Amazon includes a long list of practical titles including the following two recent publications. *The Ultimate Guide to Kink: BDSM, Role Play and the Erotic Edge* by Tristan Taormino is held by 31 libraries, including many public libraries. It is also available as an Ebrary title as an ebook. The second title, *Fifty Shades of Bondage & Submission: A Beginner's Guide to BDSM* by Renee Dubois, has 15 library holdings, almost all public libraries.

A very popular area, at least as seen in Amazon sales rankings, is swinging. This topic, however, appears to be completely off limits since no American public library claims ownership

in WorldCat to the following three books: *Swinging for Beginners: An Introduction to the Lifestyle* by Kaye Bellemeade; *The Swinger Manual* by JustAsk Julie with a high Amazon best seller ranking of #123,524; and *Recreational Sex : An Insider's Guide to the Swinging Lifestyle* by Patti Thomas. It appears that materials on this legal activity are more objectionable to libraries than discussions of how to engage in sexual activities such as prostitution that remain illegal in most jurisdictions.

On the other hand, finding publications on how to navigate the legal and quasi-legal sex scene of bars, night clubs, sex shows, and prostitution is difficult. Books on these topics are often available only as self-published ebooks. Furthermore, trying to find additional items by using the *Library of Congress Subject Headings* in relevant books discovered from Amazon is next to impossible. One item, held by 32 libraries, is *Veronica Monet's sex secrets of escorts: tips from a pro*, but it would be difficult to find it in the library catalog from its three subject headings, “Sex instruction.” “Man-woman relationships,” and “Tantrism.” Amazon lists two gay items with a focus on hustling. The first by Joseph Ite, *A Consumer's Guide to Male Hustlers*, is surprisingly from a mainstream publisher, Routledge, and has 35 holdings though many are academic institutions. The second, *Hustling : a gentleman's guide to the fine art of homosexual prostitution* by John Preston, on the other hand, is held by only eight libraries. I was not able to find commercially published materials on sex in public places and cross dressing.

For polygamy or plural marriage publications, it is impossible to distinguish among personal narratives, scholarly resources, and practical advice. Furthermore, the prominence of this topic in the history of the LDS Church and its offshoots and its acceptance in Islam results in 12,818 entries in WorldCat from a search on the keyword “polygamy.” Second, the acceptance of pornography as a means of enhancing sexual relationships of all types has enough mainstream

support to be eliminated as a serious intellectual freedom issue. Evidence for this view includes *Defending Pornography: Free Speech, Sex, and the Fight for Women's Rights* by Nadine Strossen and the many sexual education titles by Dr. Ruth K. Westheimer

Media

Music

Music shares many traits with publishing. Sexual content is harder to overlook in music than in the printed word though mumbling sometimes makes the words harder to discern. Music depends upon public airplay, mostly on the radio, for publicity. The major record labels are willing to include a high level of sexual content; but to get airplay they often make available a censored version of the recording, especially for radio play in conservative parts of the country. To give an example, “wishing you could get inside her pants” becomes “wishing she would give you a chance” in *Good Girls Don't* by The Knack.

(<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QaELi92uwwc> original

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Sc4l5EpCMec> censored)

A bibliography on music censorship in general is available in a LibGuide produced by the University Libraries at Bowling Green University. (Bowling Green State University 2012). Libraries do not appear to have faced many intellectual freedom challenges in this area. The only censorship example found in *Library Literature Online* describes a case where Kansas Attorney General Phill (sic) Kline defended “his decision this spring to refuse some 1,600 music CDs officials believed to contain inappropriate content.” (Goldberg 2004) Overall, libraries may have avoided complaints in this area by purchasing the edited versions of controversial music.

Film

Film poses increased intellectual freedom concerns since visual materials make sexual material more difficult to overlook. As stated above, print materials depend upon the imagination of the reader and thus are sometimes excluded from attempts to craft censorship legislation at national and state levels. Within the American context, film has a long history of censorship from the Production Code (1930), which was challenged and then abandoned in the late 1960's, to the current voluntary MPAA system that replaced it in 1968. (Pollard 2009) While the American Library Association *Library Bill of Rights* does not support the use of these ratings, the same document also disapproves of their removal when present. Many libraries clearly label films with these ratings. Since these ratings are created by a private body, they have no legal standing and cannot be incorporated into the law. (Caldwell-Stone 2004) The mainstream movie studios depend upon widespread distribution of their films and normally modify any film with a proposed NC rating (the former X) not because of legal concerns but because most leases prohibit movie theaters from showing NC films. (Eberts 2000) From another perspective, removing "objectionable" parts of commercial films to make them more acceptable for conservative audiences was judged to be a violation of copyright. (Gustafson 2006) Libraries sometimes have a separate process for circulating films to minors to enable parents to determine the rules for their children. As stated above, the MPAA ratings have no legal standing so that having minors check out R rated films is a library policy decision and not a legal requirement. This policy is contentious and has been challenged in many jurisdictions. (Annoyed Librarian 2008)

The Internet

The Internet poses the greatest challenge for libraries and intellectual freedom. Unlike all the other categories above, the individual library does not control the content that is made available. The Internet has become the favored way to distribute legal pornography. Legal pornography accounted for \$13 billion in revenue in 2006. (Covenant Eyes) Pornography Web sites have historically been early adopters of the technology that provides new distribution channels. The major search engines provide settings that allow any user to find easily large quantities of legal pornography. The following discussion does not include child pornography, which is illegal for its violation of the rights of those under eighteen who are not able to give their legal consent. This issue is complicated, however, by the fact that the Internet provides access to international Web sites in countries where the age of consent may be lower than in the United States. The international aspect of the Internet also makes it difficult to attempt any Internet regulation since the United States cannot control content outside its borders except through filtering and blocking payment.

While Congress has attempted to regulate sexual content on the Internet, the courts have overturned these efforts on the principle that any legislation must allow adults access to legal content and not impose unreasonable restraints such as requiring the adult to have a credit card. Efforts at the state level have also failed for the same reason. To overcome this setback, Congress has tied Internet filtering to receiving subsidies under the Children's Internet Protection Act. To receive these funds, libraries must filter access for those under eighteen while at least in theory allowing adults to have access to the full Internet upon request. (Caldwell-Stone 2013) Many libraries do not follow these guidelines and filter all computers, often with success because adult library users are afraid of the negative consequences of challenging this policy. Other libraries have decided not to filter because of the costs of doing so and the negative effects upon

computer speed. The intellectual freedom community has great concern about filters. While libraries can sometimes choose which categories to filter, the filter vendor can choose the specific sites to block through the construction of the filtering algorithms. (Kolderup 2013) Of particular concerns has been the blocking of LGBT sites without explicit sexual content while allowing sites hostile to gays. (Chmara 2012)

The second risk for libraries is the issue of creating a hostile work environment in which employees are forced to see images that they find offensive. Library employees at the Minneapolis Public Library sued and won a preliminary judgment in such a complaint. (Oder 2001) The general advice to libraries is to have at least some computers with privacy screens so that passersby cannot easily see what users are viewing. Doing so also increases user privacy for all types of materials. (Holt 2001) A final issue is whether to filter the Internet for those who use the library's wireless access on their own computers. (Landry et al. 2000)

Conclusion

Sex remains a contentious issue in American culture. On the one hand, political rhetoric and popular opinion still often support adherence to Judeo-Christian sexual morality. Many outwardly voice support for the traditional view of sex only within a heterosexual marriage. Counter evidence is the increasing acceptance of cohabitation, children outside marriage, and equal sexual rights including marriage for the LGBT community. Much evidence further suggests, however, that American behavior does not conform to these stated principles. Reliable research studies show that around 50% of U.S. teenagers are sexually active (Youth Risk Behavior Survey 2012) and that between 30-60% of spouses have had sex outside marriage. (Facts and Statistics About Infidelity) Sex sells in the media. Pornography is a \$13 billion industry. Finally, the difference in sexual values may vary more in the United States than is true

for most other Western democracies. This variance puts self-censorship pressures on the national media.

School librarians are often constrained to avoid sexual materials since a curricular focus mainly determines what they add to their collections. As seen above, state legislation often determines what schools can teach with the result that an abstinence only policy often prevails. Some school librarians, perhaps a near majority according to a recent research study, face resistance from their principals over including sexual education materials.(Richey 2012) In a similar fashion, school librarians are “under-collecting LGBTQ-themed titles. Although LGBTQ teens are estimated to make up 5.9 percent of the students in American high schools, the average number of LGBTQ-themed titles held by these school libraries was 0.4 percent.” (Hughes-Hassell, Overberg, and Harris 2013) These statistics make it even more important for school librarians to be aware of the intellectual freedom issues surrounding sexual content and the need to have the courage to provide information on sexual health and sexual choices for students.

The typical public library reflects the ambiguity over sexual content. On average, the library follows the decisions of the American public over what is acceptable or not although exceptions can occur such as was the case for Madonna’s *Sex* whose erotic visual content caused many libraries to avoid its purchase because of its visual elements even though the book was a best seller. The public library is often sensitive to challenges from the conservative elements of the community where a few concerned patrons can create strong negative publicity. The media contributes to this paranoia by occasionally running segments about unfiltered Internet access to legal pornography. (Libraries walk a tightrope on porn 2012) In general, most intellectual freedom challenges deal with access by children and young adults to material that does not reflect the challenger’s view of their innocence and appropriate behavior.

From the point of view of the public library as an information resource, a more important issue is the lack of factual information on sex health issues including support for alternative life styles, exploration of LGBT issues, and guidance on legal alternative careers such as working in the sex industry. The public library that represents America as a culture of married, traditional, heterosexual couples does not reflect the realities of American society today.

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